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Of General Thomas, whose sketch is the longest, the American people are well proud, and it may possibly be true that his not coming to the front as Commander-in-Chief was a national calamity. General Sherman, in a recent article in these pages, has marked his high opinion of the soldierly qualities of Thomas. But it certainly appears to be too late to convince the American people that he, and he alone, of all the generals of the war, is worthy of a niche in the monument erected to the saviours of the Union.

II.

DOUBT, NEGATION, FAITH.

THE interest excited by Count Tolstoi's book, "*My Religion*," will naturally find many readers for the "*Confessions*." In this book, which really preceded the other in the order of composition, the author lays bare his individual life, shows what his early training was, how he drifted into the current of fashionable folly and wickedness, and the mental processes by which he emerged from an easy-going skepticism to a tranquil and assured faith. What this faith is, and how related to the life of man and the teachings of Christ, also form a part of this interesting memoir. There is evident, throughout, deep earnestness of spirit, a knowledge of books and men, the power of philosophic abstraction, and a profound conviction on the part of the author that he has reached the conclusion of the whole matter. The thoughtful reader will find himself carried along without effort over roads often traversed,—through labyrinths of questions which have baffled wise men all the ages,—until at length he reaches the goal, which in this case is the restful faith which gives satisfaction and peace to the author. Probably the majority of readers will be unable to accept the views of life here put forward as a whole. There is a touch of mysticism and, perhaps, of fanaticism in the Count's theology, but not enough to spoil the book. The author breaks clear away from ecclesiastical moorings, but instead of landing in infidelity or mere negation, finds refuge in a fervid spirituality, in the atmosphere of which worldly and sensuous things fade and melt away. In many particulars this Confession and the added synopsis of Christ's teachings are remarkably suggestive.

The author sees a good illustration of life in "an old Eastern fable about a traveler in the steppes who is attacked by a furious wild beast. To save himself the traveler gets into a dried up well; but at the bottom of it he sees a dragon with its mouth wide open to devour him. The unhappy man dares not get out for fear of the wild beast, and dares not descend for fear of the dragon, so he catches hold of the branch of a wild plant growing in a crevice of the well. His arms grow tired and he feels that he must soon perish, death awaiting him on either side, but he still holds on; and then he sees two mice, one black and one white, gnawing through the trunk of the wild plant. As they gradually and evenly make their way around it, the plant must soon give way, break off, and he will fall into the jaws of the dragon. The traveler sees this and knows that he must inevitably perish; but, while still hanging, he looks around him, and, finding some drops of honey on the leaves of the wild plant, he stretches out his tongue and licks them." "Thus, says Tolstoi, do I cling to the branch of life, knowing that the dragon of death inevitably awaits me, ready to tear me to pieces, and I cannot understand why such tortures have fallen to my lot. I also strive to suck the honey which once comforted me, but it palls on my palate, while the white mouse and the black, day and night gnaw through the branch to which I cling."

* "*My Confession and the Spirit of Christ's Teaching*." By Count Lyof N. Tolstoi. Translated. T. Y. Crowell & Co.

The author feels that all the attempted solutions of the problem of life to be found in physiology, psychology, biology, sociology, present "a striking poverty of thought," with an utterly unjustifiable pretension to decide questions beyond their competence, and a constant contradiction of one thinker by another, and even of most thinkers by themselves. He draws a broad distinction between exact science, which deals with the succession of cause and effect in material phenomena, and theoretical science, which deals with the conception of the uncaused. The former avoids, the latter only mystifies the great subject of infinite causation. As to philosophy, the author finds that Solomon, Buddha, Socrates, Schopenhauer, all deny a meaning in life and proclaim its vanity; that however much and well men may reason they get no real answer to the question: "What is life?" except that it is an evil; hence, philosophy tends on the one hand to fatalism, despair, suicide; or, on the other, to an epicurean recklessness. As to the Church, orthodox, heterodox, evangelical, catholic, the doctrines set before him still further obscured the question, especially as nobody ever thought of living up to them. "I felt," he says, "that they (Christians of his own class in life) deceived themselves, and that for them, as for myself, the only meaning of life was to live from hand to mouth, and take, each for himself, all that his hands can lay hold on." At the same time he found that among simple peasants there were multitudes whose lives, while interwoven with superstitions, were sustained by a faith which deprived poverty and even death of terrors. This set him on a new line of research. Finally, having barely escaped suicide as a "rational" way out of the wood, he renounces the life of his own class, with its luxury, and begins the simple life of a laboring man, believing that to live after God's word a man must, in very fact, renounce all the pleasures of life, labor, be humble, endure, and be charitable to all men. He is a Christian in the sense of accepting the teachings of Christ, apart from everything else, either in Scripture or tradition; and what the teachings of Christ really are he discovers in the Gospels, and he finds, after a long process of analyzing and sifting, that "the Lord's Prayer is indeed nothing less than the whole teaching of Christ, expressed in the most condensed form." "On studying," he says, "the various forms of Christian religions, I found them to consist in large measure of the strangest superstitions, which, however, did not prevent many from finding life in their teaching. Now, the chief matter is, not whether Jesus Christ was God, or from whom descended the Holy Ghost, or when and by whom was a certain Gospel written," but the undimmed light flowing from the teachings of Christ; and in these teachings he sees not even a hint of the great mass of doctrinal theology which people usually identify with Christianity.

III.

UNSOLVED PROBLEMS IN SCIENCE.

No apology, such as the author offers in his preface, is needed for the appearance of well written and intelligible works on such topics as are discussed by Mr. J. H. Kedzie, of Chicago, in the treatise before us.* Revolutionary some of the ideas advanced may indeed be called; but not in the sense of being unscientific, or of unsettling conclusions regarded as scientifically established. And even if the book *were* revolutionary in this sense of the term it would not, for that reason, be unwelcome. The world stands in need of books which throw light on the great problems of existence, or which place old truths in a new light. It would be rash to say that Mr. Kedzie has succeeded in establishing his positions in relation to the unsolved problems indicated in the title of his book, but he has certainly presented

* "Solar Heat, Gravitation, and Sun Spots." By J. H. Kedzie. S. C. Griggs & Co.